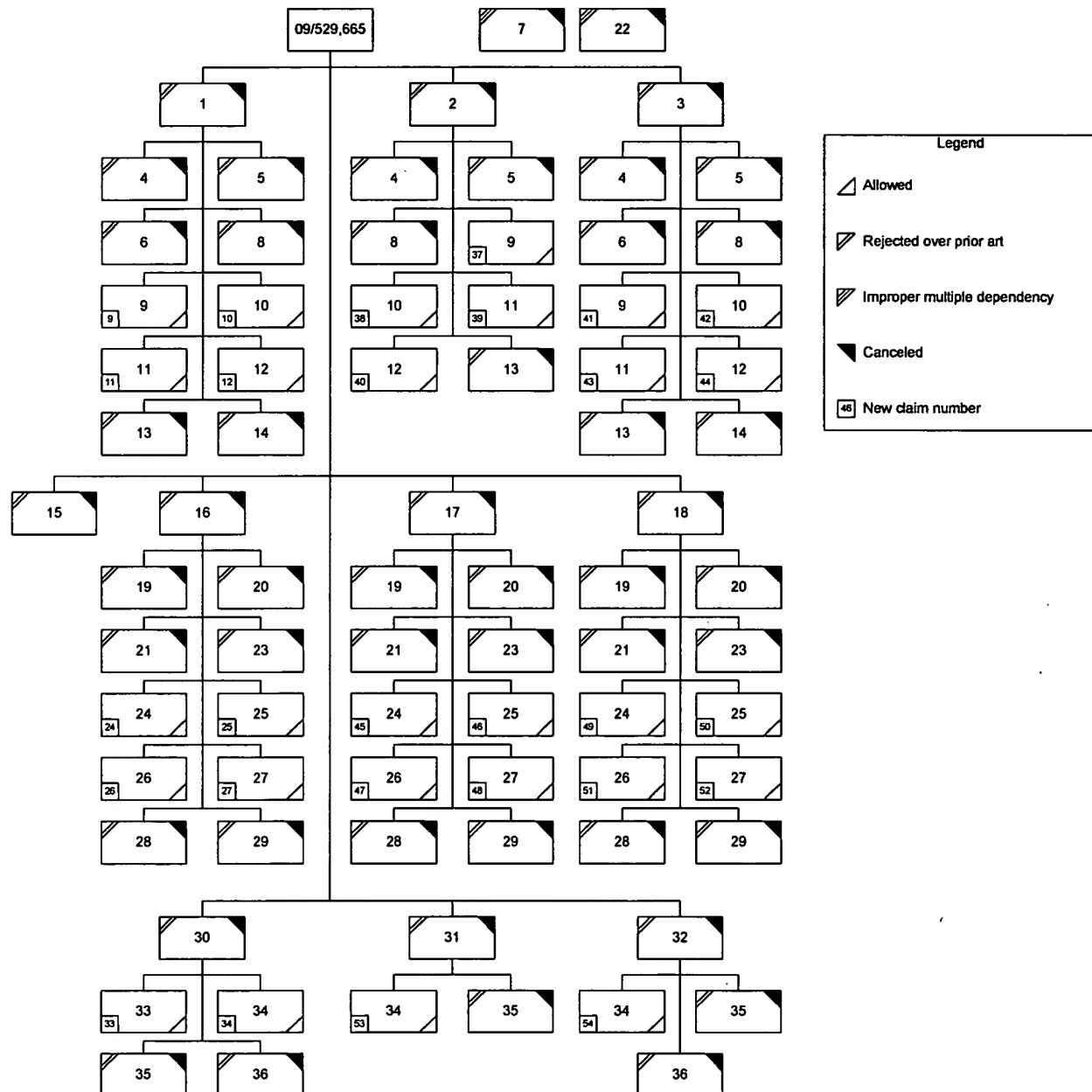


REMARKS

The status of the claims as amended above is reflected in the following chart:



In particular, claims 1-8, 13-23, 28-32, 35, and 36 have been canceled. Claims 9-12, 24-27, 33, and 34 have been rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the respective base claims and any intervening claims. These claims, formerly in multiple dependent

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
USSN 09/529,332
ATTORNEY DOCKET NO. Q58650

form, are no longer in multiple dependent form. The multiple dependencies have been resolved by adding new claims 37-54, and the correspondence between old and new claim numbers can be seen in the above-identified chart.

Applicant has canceled all of the claims rejected over prior art or not examined in view of improper multiple dependency. The Examiner stated that the remaining claims 9-12, 24-27, 33, and 34 would be allowable if appropriately rewritten. Applicant has so rewritten these claims as claims 9-12, 24-27, 33, 34, and 37-54, and thus respectfully requests of the Examiner their allowance.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Applicant files herewith an Excess Claim Fee Payment Letter (with payment) for 18 more independent claims beyond the 10 independent claims for which payment has been previously made, and also a Petition (with payment) for an Extension of Time of three months. The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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WASHINGTON OFFICE

23373

CUSTOMER NUMBER

Date: March 29, 2004